

Morning Reflection

Thursday, March 26, 2020

Good morning! I'm here in the tunnel...

- Used to be so dark, cold, event wet, and always under construction
- Now it's all finished...and so bright, so white, and with so much light
- Great image for us—there is always light at the end of the tunnel...hey, there's even light in the tunnel!

Our prayer is taken from a passage to which I frequently return, especially in times of struggle—in times of doubt and worry. It is from Matthew's gospel, where Jesus reminds the disciples of their worth and value, and of God's unconditional care and compassion. It somehow gives me the assurance that God is with me and that affirmation that I am loved. I hope it does the same for you:

And so we begin, "In the name...

Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Heavenly Father's knowing.

Even all of the hairs on your head are counted.

So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

May we hear these words today—you are worth more than many sparrows. May they touch our hearts and sink deep into our souls. Even during this difficult time of the Coronavirus, even at this very moment as we gather as a community this morning, may each of us and all of us know God's love.

We ask this each in his and her own way, and I ask it in the name..."

Coronavirus Updates

- Essex County cases—risen to 177 (up 100 in two days); MA deaths—15
- New York City has become the new epicenter in this country
- Senate passed the massive aid bill yesterday
- No changes at Fenwick; no confirmed diagnoses, no new quarantines; last person on a 14-day quarantine is almost done
- Governor issued an order yesterday closing schools until at least May 4

What does all of this mean for Fenwick?

Context:

- Two weeks ago today, we held the one-and-only performance of *Freaky Friday*, and we announced the decision to close on Friday, March 13, out of an abundance of caution. We had already decided to have a professional day on the following Monday, March 16, to prepare for the seemingly distant possibility of transitioning exclusively to online education.
- That Sunday, March 15, the Governor issued the order to close all schools in the Commonwealth until April 7.
- Only 8 days later, on Monday, March 23, the Governor issued the “stay at home” advisory for the state effective at noon on Tuesday, March 24.
- Only 48 hours later, just yesterday, the Governor extended the school closure to May 4.
- In two weeks, we went from making precautionary plans and taking preventative measures—many of which seemed based on extremely, even absurdly, remote scenarios—to living a new normal that will now last at least another five weeks.
- If you’re feeling unsettled or unnerved, overwhelmed or overstressed, don’t worry; that is totally natural!
- Want to thank our faculty and staff—and most particularly our teachers; they have been exemplary, extraordinary in responding to this challenge; we could not be where we are or who we are without them.

Let’s be clear about the Priorities:

- #1: Physical health and safety; avoid exposure to COVID-19
- #2: Personal health and wellbeing; mental, social, emotional, and relational wellness; we need to take care of ourselves and of each other; be sure to check out the many resources listed on our website
- #3: School: teaching and learning, growing and maturing, developing gifts and talents, strengths and skills; making progress; moving forward

Policies for Moving Forward

- Marking Periods and Grading Policies
 - No 3rd Quarter Grade Reports
 - The 3rd and 4th Quarters, for all students, will be combined into a single grade for the Second Semester
 - Check your grades online to track your progress
 - We will be in touch next week, once we complete two full weeks of our virtual schedule, with an update on grades
 - We will also hold some listening sessions for parents!

- AP Testing
 - All AP tests will take place online
 - College Board will be sharing the official schedule on Friday, April 3
- Holidays and Vacations
 - Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Monday are currently days off from school; while we may use the Thursday or the Monday for virtual learning, we do not anticipate major changes to this schedule
 - Spring Vacation is scheduled from April 20-24; unless the Governor or the Archdiocese issues an order/recommendation to the contrary, we do not—at this point in time—anticipate holding virtual classes during the April Break
- Athletics
 - There will be no state tournaments for Spring Sports sponsored by the MIAA
 - Our league, the CCL, is currently exploring a variety of options for having an abbreviated spring season if we can return to school on May 4; we are trying to salvage something for our student-athletes

Specifically for Seniors

- Again, the 3rd and 4th Quarters will be combined for one grade; and the AP tests will happen online according the soon released College Board plan
- For college decisions, some schools are moving the declaration day to June 1; be in touch with your College Counselor regarding any/all questions
- Senior Service:
 - The program is suspended as of today; the numbers of hours you have completed will be sufficient to meet the requirement.
 - We are not going to ask Seniors to complete additional service hours during this time of the “stay at home” advisory.
 - We recognize this is less-than-ideal, and we commend so many Seniors who already fulfilled much of the requirement—well done!
 - We do encourage Seniors to explore any/all opportunities for virtual service—check out the resources that Mrs. MacDonald will provide.
 - Most importantly, we encourage you to be of service at home; your families need you; do your part to help your family during this difficult time; after all, charity begins at home.
- Senior Exams: we are currently exploring a number of models, recognizing that going from remote online learning right into traditional final exams is neither practical nor desirable; we will have a plan for Senior Exams to share with you no later than Wednesday, April 8

- Commencement and all graduation-related events:
 - In a spirit of optimism and hopefulness, we are still planning for these events to take place the week of May 18-22.
 - We are looking at hosting most events—including the Baccalaureate Mass, Senior Awards Night, and Commencement—here on campus; this will give us the most flexibility in regards to timing, logistics, etc.
 - We are hosting a Zoom meeting with Senior student leaders tomorrow at 2:00 PM; please reach out to one of the following students with any thoughts or ideas in advance of this meeting; I will send an email reminder to all of the members of the Class of 2020 with this list of names later this morning.
 - We promise to do everything in our power to make this a most memorable, meaningful, and joyful Senior spring.

Finally, please remember to submit your Droplets of Joy by sending an email to dropletsofjoy@fenwick.org or messaging our Instagram account [bishopfenwickHS](#).

Take care. Mr. Nunan.